

# WHAT DO YOU SAY ... PSA PART ONE

## GRADE LEVELS

6-8 and 9-12

## TIME ALLOTMENT

5 class periods, 80 minutes each

## OVERVIEW

Messages about today's social issues are seen not only in print form, in newspapers and magazines, but also as public service announcements (PSAs) on television. PSAs inform or caution the public about the consequences and implications of particular issues. Through the activities in this lesson, students will be introduced to the process of creating and presenting social messages. They will become aware of public service announcements and will produce their own messages on socially relevant topics.

## SUBJECT MATTER

English language arts, social studies

## LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Students will be able to:

- 1) Analyze the format, structure, and differences between advertisements and public service announcements and differentiate between an educational message and a selling message
- 2) Become aware of their own reactions to educational messages and the impact these messages create to guard or warn others of specific dangers

- 3) Create the concepts needed to develop a visual message
- 4) Learn about target audiences

## STANDARDS

### Maine Learning Results

<http://www.state.me.us/education/lres/lres.htm>

### English/Language Arts

- C. Languages and Images: Students will demonstrate an understanding of how words and images communicate.
- 1) Understand factors that commonly affect language change and use.
  - 2) Demonstrate an understanding of the relationship among perception, thought, and language.
  - 3) Use knowledge of the fundamental parts of speech when writing and speaking.
  - 4) Demonstrate an understanding of the political implications of different forms of language.
  - 5) Identify propaganda techniques used by writers and speakers.

### Social Studies

- A. Rights, Responsibilities, and Participation: Students will understand the rights and responsibilities of civic life and employ the skills of effective civic participation.
- 1) Identify the characteristics of an effective citizen.
  - 2) Identify ways in which citizens in a pluralistic society manage differences of opinion on public policy issues.
  - 3) Assess the reasons why participation of an attentive, knowledgeable, and competent citizenry is important to constitutional democracy, using examples from personal or historical experience.

## MEDIA COMPONENTS

### I) Video

#### Maine PBS

*Youth Voices II*

*Youth Voices Public Services Announcements*

## 2) Web Sites

### Salo Productions

[www.saloproductions.com](http://www.saloproductions.com)

This video and production company has sample public service announcements that they have developed for various organizations and government agencies. To access, download Windows MediaPlayer or Realplayer for viewing and audio.

### Infoseek

[www.infoseek.com](http://www.infoseek.com)

This information-based site contains press releases, news briefs, and information on up-to-date topics.

## MATERIALS

- 1) 1 PSA Worksheet\* for each student
- 2) 1 Presentation Evaluation Sheet\* for each student
- 3) A collection of magazines, newspapers, brochures, bulletins, and posters from a variety of sources
- 4) Whiteboard or flipchart for recording topic ideas
- 5) Poster board and markers for student-designed visual aids

\* Reproducible form is included with this teaching packet.

## PREP FOR TEACHERS

Be sure that videos are rewound and ready to play.

- o During the use of media, provide students with a **Focus for Media Interaction**: a specific task to complete and/or information to identify during or after viewing segments to focus their attention.

## INTRODUCTORY ACTIVITY

Present the class with a variety of brochures, magazines, and newspapers. Make sure that these materials include numerous advertisements, including some public service ads.

Discuss the images contained in the materials, especially the ads. Provide students with a **Focus for Media Interaction** by having them consider the following questions:

- o What are the advertisements trying to tell you?
- o What are the advertisements trying to sell you?
- o What is most appealing about the images these print advertisements use?

Now call students' attention to the public service announcements /ads; explain that PSAs serve a special purpose that is somewhat different from commercial advertisements. Then introduce the term target audience. Have students choose one social topic, such as the issue of drinking while driving. Have them find PSAs that relate to this topic. Then discuss the following questions:

- o How is this message presented for teenagers? For adults? For senior citizens?
- o Are the messages different among these age groups, or target audiences? Why or why not?

Introduce the term message. Discuss as a class:

- o What is a message?
- o How is a message different from information?
- o How are messages in newspapers different from those on television or the radio?
- o How do messages get us to feel angry? Sad? Sympathetic? Frightened?
- o Do these messages make us take an action or make changes in our lives?

Have students identify various ways in which people can take action after hearing, reading, or seeing a message. Discuss with students the differences between persuasive writing, instructive writing, and descriptive writing. In ads that contain descriptive writing or speech, the aim is to give information or explain a situation. In instructive writing, the aim is to provide the audience with knowledge and/or skills. In persuasive writing, the aim is to stimulate people to take a particular course of action or to believe in something.

Have students consider and discuss these questions:

- o Is it difficult to stimulate people to do something? Why or why not?
- o Is it difficult to present a new idea to people – to persuade them to believe something or learn something that they didn't believe before they started listening?

Lead a discussion on the differences between a commercial advertisement and a public service announcement (PSA). Talk about various societal issues that PSAs try to guard or caution citizens about, such as drinking and driving, using illegal drugs, wearing dark clothes on the streets at night, and storing guns safely.

## LEARNING ACTIVITIES

### Step 1

Provide students with a **Focus for Media Interaction** before beginning the first video: Ask, "What messages are these young people discussing? What are they most concerned about?"

**Start** the video *Youth Voices II*.

**Stop** the video when it is finished, and discuss the following media-related questions with students:

- o What are some topics that citizens should take responsibility for? What types of issues do people need to be aware of? (*Write all topics either on the board or on a flipchart.*)
- o Why are social messages – such as the importance of recycling, the implications of drinking and driving, and the dangers of substance abuse – important messages for all citizens?

### Step 2

Hand out a copy of the Student Worksheet to each student. Explain that the class will now watch a video, *Youth Voices Public Service Announcements*, which includes various PSAs made by young people about social issues.

Provide students with a **Focus for Media Interaction** by preparing them to listen to and view these PSAs. They should take notes on each one, identifying the message and the target audience. Next, **play** the video, cueing to the first four of the PSAs that capture youth messages. Pause the video following each 30- to 60-second PSA, and allow students the opportunity to write down their notes on the worksheet.

When the worksheets have been completed, discuss the message of each PSA. How well did each public service announcement make its points about a particular issue? Have students be sure to identify the images, sounds, and words on the screen that convey the PSA message to a general audience. Have them identify strong PSAs and the types of imagery and sound used to create their impact.

Provide students with a **Focus for Media Interaction**: Have them access the Web site [www.saloproductions.com](http://www.saloproductions.com) to view a number of sample public service announcements. These samples include messages from various agencies and organizations that this firm has represented in the PSAs it has developed. This site will familiarize students with other forms of public service announcements as well as other issues and messages of interest to the public.

### Step 3

Cue the video to the *Youth Voices Public Service Announcements* segment about gun safety. Provide students with a **Focus for Media Interaction**: Have them watch this segment again, then give their opinions of the message, the visuals, and the imagery used. **Rewind** the tape and **replay** the segment, but this time eliminate the audio.

Next, discuss these media-focus questions with the class:

- o What is the impact of sound versus no sound in this PSA?
- o What effect does this have on a general audience?
- o How was the message of the PSA stronger, or weaker, with the audio? Without the audio?
- o Does the message change according to the words on the screen?

- o Have students select an interesting magazine ad and imagine this ad on television. Would this change of medium alter the ad in any way?

#### Step 4

Explain that students will need to identify social topics that other students might need to be more aware of as responsible citizens. Have the class divide into either pairs or groups of four. Ask each group to review the list of topics that the class brainstormed in Step 1. Groups should then select one of these topics to highlight in their own public service announcement. This should be a topic that:

- o Is familiar to one or more group members
- o The group has a clear opinion about
- o Might have recently impacted the students' own community

After the groups have decided on their topics, they need to start collecting material. Some suggestions might be to have students:

- o Go to the library and research recent laws or events about the topic
- o Search the Internet for the most recent articles or events regarding the topic, including on [www.infoseek.com](http://www.infoseek.com)
- o Scan the newspapers for several days for related events or ads about the topic; these references should be clipped and saved

#### Step 5

Once students have collected information over several days, have each group create an outline, using their available materials, for an oral presentation of a public service announcement. Their oral presentations should include the main idea related to their individual topics, including causes and effects. Their messages should be as focused as possible, and each group should be able to summarize its message in writing.

Discuss these points prior to having students prepare their oral presentations:

- o How is body language used in presenting information?
- o Why is facial expression an important visual aid?
- o Why is eye contact an important visual aid?
- o What happens when you tell of a tragic or dangerous event? How does your tone of voice affect your presentation?
- o How does the speed of the speaker's voice affect the presentation? What impact does fast speech have? What about slow speech?

### Step 6

Have each group create a poster that "advertises" the causes and effects of the topic they have chosen. They should also include a recommended action for people to take to avoid these effects or consequences. Have students design their visual aids, keeping the following points in mind:

- o Each group may use only one visual aid that contains one main idea; the concept of cause and effect should be included in the visual.
- o Visuals should use key words in a simple, clear manner.
- o Consider the use of color: It is often most effective if only one or two colors predominate in an image.

### Step 7

Allow each group to present their topic and their visuals. Invite another class to hear the presentations so that students can practice performing PSAs in front of others. Ask students who are listening to each presentation to complete the Presentation Evaluation Sheet for each group they watch. This evaluation sheet will allow presenters to assess their oral delivery and the impact of their visual component.

Ask students who have delivered their oral presentations to consider:

- o Did students in the audience seem to react to the presented message?
- o Did the audience seem interested in the presentation? Why or why not?
- o What could the presenters have done differently to deliver their message?



## CROSS-CURRICULAR EXTENSIONS

### Science

Collaborate with the science department to create a unit of study that explores science-related social issues. One example might be teen smoking; another might be good nutrition versus poor nutrition and how these issues impact our health and our daily lives.

### English Language Arts

Students can also work with local teen clubs or organizations to help these groups develop strong messages for other community teen members as part of their organizations' missions.

## COMMUNITY EXTENSIONS

- 1) Invite speakers from the community who have been directly affected by the results of a contemporary social issue – for example, a mother whose son has been killed by a drunk driver, or a young teen whose sibling has died of a drug overdose.
- 2) Have a local ad agency send a representative to discuss designing commercial advertisements and public service announcements. This person could explain what kinds of research an ad agency does prior to developing an advertisement; he or she could also mention the different kinds of jobs/career tracks involved in working for an ad agency.
- 3) Have a local organization like MADD (Mothers Against Drunk Drivers) present to the class their organization's mission. This presentation should include information about their promotional/publicity methods, how they educate others about their cause, and how they tailor their organization's message to various age groups.

# PSA WORKSHEET (SIDE 1)

## MAINE PBS Youth Voices Public Service Announcements

<b>PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENT #1</b>
Target audience
Message
Sound used
Visual imagery used
Print imagery used
How did you feel when viewing this PSA? What were your emotions?
What action do you feel you need to take after viewing this PSA?

<b>PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENT #2</b>
Target audience
Message
Sound used
Visual imagery used
Print imagery used
How did you feel when viewing this PSA? What were your emotions?
What action do you feel you need to take after viewing this PSA?

# PSA WORKSHEET (SIDE 2)

## MAINE PBS Youth Voices Public Service Announcements

<b>PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENT #3</b>
Target audience
Message
Sound used
Visual imagery used
Print imagery used
How did you feel when viewing this PSA? What were your emotions?
What action do you feel you need to take after viewing this PSA?

<b>PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENT #4</b>
Target audience
Message
Sound used
Visual imagery used
Print imagery used
How did you feel when viewing this PSA? What were your emotions?
What action do you feel you need to take after viewing this PSA?

# PRESENTATION EVALUATION SHEET

What was the topic? \_\_\_\_\_

What was the message? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Who is the message directed to? Describe the audience. \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Do you think you would take an action after hearing this presentation? \_\_\_\_\_

Why or why not? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

What action might you take? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Did the visual make an impact on you emotionally? \_\_\_\_\_

Why or why not? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

How did the presenter(s) assist in delivering the message with

o Tone of voice? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

o Body language? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

o Eye contact? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

What did you learn about this topic? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_